



Lenin Writing

## Writing

Writing comes first because it is the ordering art of so many other arts. For some examples, radio and television programmes, plays and films require a “script”. Opera requires a “libretto”.

Building information can be conveyed almost entirely without words, as in the books of Palladio, but as with other “plastic arts” like painting and sculpture, a lot of words usually get used during the creative process. Even, or especially, the “[art of insurrection](#)”, as Lenin called it, relies on words for it to happen.

In politics, writing is indispensable. Most of our cadres need to be able to write. By being able to write is meant more than to be literate, just as being literate means more than to be able to read.

The question of language will mainly be left to another CU course, fully dedicated to Languages. Suffice it here to say that we need writers in all the languages used in South Africa, and not just in the 11 official ones. We need people who can at least handle text in French, Portuguese, Swahili, and Arabic, as well, because these, together with English, are at present the international languages of Africa.

In this item, we are talking about writing in general. What advice can we give?

The purpose of writing is to be understood. Political writing is better when it is shorter. To compose your thoughts, use “Mind Maps”, as described in the attached text. To organise your research, follow the “Organic Study Guide” contained in the document, and similar advice.

Write in Prose. Prose is in paragraphs, and it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Prose does not rely on bullets, numbers, letters or other listing mechanisms.

A good way to start writing is to write in a way that is adapted from the way you speak. If you can make yourself understood in speech, then you should be able to make yourself equally well understood with the same words on paper. Then you can

improve. There is no requirement for you to be pompous. Simplicity is best.

Political writing is better when shorter. All kinds of writing are limited as to length. Therefore make a habit of watching the number of words in any piece of writing (your own, and whenever possible, other people's).

Here is a rough indication of the kinds of length required for different kinds of writing:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Length (+/-)</u>
Sentence	10 words
Paragraph	50 words
Letter to the Editor	300 words
Press Release/Newspaper Report	300 words
Article ("op ed" or "feature")	750 words
Speech (100 words per minute)	1 500 words
Essay	2 500 words
Chapter of a book	5 000 words
Book of ten chapters	50 000 words

From this chart it can be seen that each succeeding kind of project can be built up by repeating elements similar to the preceding, smaller ones. Writing is a modular, additive kind of work, like bricklaying. The modules are small. Short sentences and short paragraphs are best in political writing, and in journalism. If you can write a sentence, then you can write a book.

Reading goes with writing. Both are habits. Keep reading, and keep writing, like breathing in and breathing out. Try to write for people. Any readers are good readers. Even a small amount of feedback is extremely instructive.

Lenin described himself as a writer. Lenin's style became clearer and clearer as he became more experienced. Lenin's style is a good model of shortness combined with clarity.

Writing is a pleasure. The Chilean communist writer Volodia Teitelboim used to say that writing was the easiest way he knew of being happy.

- The above is to introduce an original reading-text: [Preparing to write - Buzan's 'Use Your Head', 1974.](#)
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